



**STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT
IN THE POST
COVID ERA:
Series XXIII**

School Name: University of Texas at Austin
Year: Junior
Major: Biomedical Engineering
GPA: 2.97

Q: What is a typical school day like for you?

I wake up at around 9 a.m. and I usually make breakfast. My first classes are at 10 a.m. so I usually get on my laptop and I go to my class. Usually, I have my class from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. In between class I go get food, then after 3 p.m., I go to the gym. After I go to the gym I come back, maybe chill with my roommates for a little bit. Chill with my friends and then we get dinner together and we'll go back and study. We might watch TV or sports or play video games for a little bit and then just study, get ready for bed and redo the same thing.

Q: Since your classes are online, do you find them understandable and engaging?

Yes, but there is an emphasis on following the textbook. Some of the teachers have been emphasizing that all students have their textbooks. For me, I'm just making sure that I have all of my books. I'm really just trying to follow the textbook because if I don't follow through with it, for example, if I miss something from the professor, he wants us to get the answer from the book. So I make sure to have everything ready.

Q: Are classes more difficult now that everything's online?

I think in a sense yes, but I think overall it's a give or take. I wouldn't say that it is exactly harder.

Q: A few other people have told me that their professors have been piling on more homework, is that something you've experienced?

No. I feel like right now my teachers are a lot more flexible with deadlines, but it's also because in my area there's a hurricane.



Q: How is it like being in school with the hurricane?

So if you're in the area with the hurricane, you have deadlines that are pretty flexible which is great. If you have a test coming up but you're in a different time zone, the teachers will give you combinations which is also really great because, for example, I am in Oregon right now. I'm in a different time zone and it is my responsibility to make sure that I get to lectures on time. Overall they're pretty flexible on that.

Q: Is it difficult having to watch lectures and do assignments all in the same place?

I feel like that's a huge detriment since I no longer have a study area. For example, in the apartment I live in, because of COVID, my apartment is supposed to have study areas right in the main lounge that is closed off due to COVID. I can only really study in the kitchen or in my own room or find other places. So me and my friends, we just snuck into one of the study rooms in the university. We found a little path to get to it, but otherwise, I just study in my room or the study spot that my friend and I found.

Q: Is it hard studying when you have all these other roommates that you're living with?

Yes. I have 4 roommates, so if we have a test or someone's tutoring, for example, we will tell the other people 'hey I'm tutoring 2 to 4 p.m. don't blend smoothies' or like that kind of stuff. If someone's too loud, we're going to put it in the group chat to shut up.

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Q: Have you at all been able to connect with any of your classmates?

Yes, the teacher likes to use breakout rooms but we usually rely on GroupMe. I usually just hang out with my friends, I don't really care about the other kids in my classes.

Q: So taking away from that, I'm assuming you really haven't been able to meet anyone within this semester?

No, not in person because the only people I've met so far are through my fraternity. We have a rush process where we accept new people into the fraternity and so I've met a couple of guys that come around. We invite them over just to get to know them.

Q: How has the rush process been with COVID?

We try to minimize in-person interactions. So we might grab lunch with like one or two guys but nothing other than that.

Q: Have your teachers done anything to really help you out with this experience at all?

Other than flexible deadlines not really. I like how they give us more time to do homework and stuff so that's pretty chill. And with tests, you have more time for assessments.

Q: Is there anything you wish your teachers would do to help you?

I wish they would upload their online lectures faster for example. If I miss a lecture, I might have to wait a day or two for them to upload.

